



***SABRE HOLDINGS***

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***UNITED WORLD for USA TODAY***

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**SABRE:** So our center runs 7 days a week, twenty four hours a day and three hundred and sixty five days a year. We support airlines, cars, hotels and travel agency here in forty five different countries in fifteen languages. So there was a variety of activities when we originally opened up the center, it was mostly intended to be front line customer service, but we found that the talent that we were able to get, we were really able to grow the skills and bring additional jobs. We were only supposed to be three hundred and we are nine hundred twenty five right now, so it really speaks to the talent that we were able to get locally.

**UNITED WORLD: Where do you find all these people, where do you find nine hundred people qualified to respond to your needs in terms of languages, for instance?**

**SABRE:** We have different ways, we go to the local universities and also taking in account that during the crisis a lot of Uruguayans left to work in Europe, we advertised bring them back. They gained those language skills and bring them back together with a good business knowledge. And you know what? It brings the young people back to Uruguay, so they are with their families and they have good jobs. We also provide them with good benefit packages.

**UNITED WORLD: We heard the same story in another company where a very kind lady came to the Vice President of the company and said. -“Thank you very much!”. -“Why?”,- he replied. -“Well, thanks to you and your company, and because you chose Uruguay to launch the business, my son is now here, with me, working in this country”.**

**SABRE:** Exactly. And, I think because of being such a family oriented culture, it is the right thing for the country; also I do not think this country wants to lose their human capital in Europe, for example, when you can benefit the country right here. When we find these people we also have to train them, we have a pretty intensive training program; it takes about three to six months depending on the position, and everybody needs to be trained. So, because we spend so much energy and time training people, we make sure we keep them. We really focus on making sure you are good at your job, as you will need to stay there for a period of time, we invest on that. So we offer a lot of things like good benefit package, we are competitive in the marketplace from a salary's perspective. And the number one thing we do is career pathing: so I may start out as a contact specialist but I may end up being a team leader/director. The opportunity for growth is very big. In Uruguay we've been among the top ten great places to work, for the past three years; we have been awarded with IQPC, with the best contact center, a global award we are very proud about of.

Mostly, this area upstairs supports all our travel agency customers, so when a travel agent becomes a Sabre customer, we have to do the contracts, we have to install equipment, we do collections, we write checks; all of this kind back office activity. The core business is part of TN which is one of the businesses of Sabre, this is the travel agency part.

**UNITED WORLD: So you were saying you have the financial center here in terms of credit controlling?**

**SABRE:** We do collection activities here; we prepare the books for various travel agent customers.

**UNITED WORLD: Do you mind if we continue the interview while we tour? ¿Why do you choose Uruguay, what is that Uruguay offers, apart from the people that is well trained and that speak a lot of languages?**

**SABRE:** Well, government transparency, so we knew that we were getting into a democratic environment, a very safe environment and security and turnkey solutions, so we were able to set up the center in a relatively short period of time once we made the decision to move. So there are not a lot of turn keys environments, and what I mean is they got all the infrastructure in place in some of the other countries that we were looking at.

**UNITED WORLD: Does everybody who works here speak Spanish?**

**SABRE:** Everybody speaks English and Spanish, minimum. I have many people trilingual and one lady that speaks five languages. When you think about supporting customers in Europe, the fact that she can take an Italian call, a French call a Swedish call, that is miraculous. I would say no one probably in our company has a such a global perspective than my employees here, because they serve the globe. They really understand the answers the market needs. A lot of companies had contact centers in various locations and I find that they are bringing them all together, similar to what we do, driving synergies.

We have marketing, we have technical positions, GetThere is one of our organizations, that supports corporate travel customers; so if I am a big corporate travel agent I use that tool and that support is done from here.

**UNITED WORLD: Sometimes, may be is not clear what a company like Sabre in terms of advanced technology offers to the market. We are used to the old concept of travel industry, like travel agencies, the three traditional players. So in what ways does Sabre adds value to the travel industry, to the perception of it?**

**SABRE:** Well, I what we do is to connect travelers with the travel industry, so we are really good at getting people where they want to go associated with our partners.

**UNITED WORLD: I heard you saying women add value in terms of emotional intelligence.**

**SABRE:** I think that from my perspective there is a lot of leadership value that women can add that is not being taken advantage of in Latin America specifically; it is not intentional it is because of the historical perspective. So Sabre is supporting a women's leadership program with Endeavour, to help women further advance in Latin America.

And I think emotional intelligence is natural for us and we bring it to the table and it is good for business and it needs to be recognized as an important part of business. A lot of my leaders are women and they may not had have that opportunities in other organizations. You have to create a balance between both, men and women.

**UNITED WORLD: In the last months we had over forty interviews and we were searching for women in high executive positions in Uruguay and we had three women to interview. One was the president from Antel, the other one was the major from Montevideo and the other one is you.**

**SABRE:** It's not balanced and that is what I am proposing to bring some balance to the table, is not just to be nice, it is for good business reasons. Always balance is important whenever you ever look at the equation of men and women and diversity, it all brings something to the table.

So we have our own HR department, it is pretty big because they do the pay roll out of here, all of the hiring. If you think about hiring nine hundred employees over the course of six years they are pretty busy.. Our virtual learning centers that you see here, we basically provide learning online, in life kind of webax environment to fifteen different languages in forty five countries.

So we actually even do sales out of here; our small business customers they are contacted locally so they do outbound sale calls. We have a relationship with those customers so it is not what you would call a cold-call, it is more about building relationships with small customers just like if they were in the country.

**UNITED WORLD: What are the plans of expansion, do you have any plans of expansion in terms of hiring new people or in terms of growing vertically or horizontal.**

**SABRE:** Our intention for Uruguay was three hundred right now we are nine hundred and some change, so it speaks to the success but I really do not know of any future plans beyond that.

**UNITED WORLD: This is the second largest location of the company and you are behind this success, you are the head of this success. For the last two months everybody place the example of Sabre, in terms of what a company is capable of reaching in Uruguay.**

**SABRE:** So I think, one thing that is a strength for Sabre that the other companies can learn from, is we are really employee advocates and what I mean by that is we know the jobs are hard. So how can we get the best training? How can we get some fun for them? We also have a variety of events. We are also very engaged with the community collaborating in certain social causes.

So that is a global strategy of Sabre to have good CSR policies in place and that's something other companies could learn from us as sometimes they don't see the long term value, which is huge!

So when you talk about off shoring, in general, people have this perspective of multinational taking advantage of the labour and not reinvesting benefits to allow the sustainable growth. We have invested, engaged and created an environment that makes the employees want to be part of Sabre. We create part of the future leadership. That is the key.

We commit that we will answer 70% of our calls in not more than 40 seconds. As you see they are all over 70%

We also have great technology that supports the services and our professionals.

We have service excellence awards for employees too, in order to promote good service it gives credibility from our customers and it is also a sign of confidence for employees.

**UNITED WORLD: What have been the main challenges, since you arrive here in Uruguay?**

**SABRE:** I think one of the biggest challenges we've had was growing as quickly as we had and making sure we instill the knowledge base in employees, so that they could really and truly serve the customers as we expected, that is from a business perspective. From a cultural perspective, I think sometimes people do not understand the culture of Sabre and the fact that we are employee advocates and so they assume bad things about multinationals. We are not like that. We're investing and we want people to understand the business and the opportunities.